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ABSTRACT

The program is a learning system designed to facilitate the professional growth of (1) teachers in training (student teachers, doctoral interns, overseas personnel); (2) teachers in service (in Alabama and overseas schools, and university professors); (3) educational leadership personnel (overseas school administrators, State Department of Education personnel, University leaders). The Office of Overseas Schools provides facilitating funding; participating schools abroad give on-site assistance; the University provides financial, personnel, and facility resources and is the administering, planning, and coordinating agent. Four experimental components comprise the program: (1) provision of multi-cultural environment for affective learning; (2) conduct of formal instruction to improve professional competencies; (3) inservice and specialized experience for instructional, curricular, and administrative improvements; (4) conduct of research and experimentation to provide information and practicum experiences. The learning experiences require reciprocal activities and interinvolvement of target populations. The program enhances teacher training and serves as a laboratory and model for further development of innovative programs, cooperation in teacher preparation, and expansion of the behaviors which professional preparation in the field of education affects. Five agencies participate in program evaluation. (JS)

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IMPROVED TEACHER TRAINING THROUGH
DIMENSIONS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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The University of Alabama College of Education International Program is a learning system designed to facilitate the professional growth of three teacher populations through utilization of participating talents in mutually advantageous ways. The teacher populations include:

- a) teachers in training,
- b) teachers in service, and
- c) educational leadership personnel.

Three inputs provide the program base. The Office of Overseas Schools provides facilitating funding; participating schools abroad give on-site assistance; the University provides financial, personnel and facility resources and is the administering, planning and coordinating agent.

Four experiential components comprise the program:

- a) provision of a multi-cultural environment for affective learning,
- b) conduct of formal instruction to improve professional competencies,
- c) in-service and specialized experiences for instructional, curricular and administrative improvements, and
- d) conduct of research and experimentation to provide information and practicum experiences.

The learning experiences in the program require reciprocal activities and interinvolvement of target populations which help to maximize benefits to all designated groups. Additional spin-off benefits have been noted, though not measured.

The objectives of the program are to:

- a) improve teacher education by expanding the scope of learning experiences and increasing support during internship,
- b) improve teacher performance in Alabama and overseas by providing experiences to increase resources supporting instruction and to develop continuing professional linkages,

- c) develop research opportunities with distinctly different educational circumstances and populations to free results from cultural and regional bias, and
- d) explore methods of institutional cooperation to promote more responsive and relevant learning organizations.

I. ORGANIZATION OF PROGRAM SUPPORT

Financial support for the Program in International Education is provided by the University and the Office of Overseas Schools. OO/S provides monies for travel of professional staff, cost of instruction and direct administrative expenses. The University absorbs the costs of administrators' time, supplies professor-time during low-cost periods, waives tuition and fees for overseas course work and registration and purchases materials, including professional libraries, for support of the program. Cooperation of the faculty of the College of Education allows the purchase of instruction time at low cost by planning and scheduling procedures that avoids the need for staff substitution. This also insures that conduct of the program does not detract from the regular program of the college. The University also provides ten to fifteen assistantships to selected program participants. Another University expense is service time to the program by graduate assistants and others not participating in the program directly.

The overseas schools contribute to the support of the program expense by absorbing on-site clerical and managerial expenses to provide program housing, communications, and ancillary services such as living arrangements and scheduling.

In addition to financial support, the University provides planning and management services for the program. Included are program design, budgeting, record-keeping and coordinating functions.

The largest single contribution made by the University is in professional time. The benefits to the program for teachers makes this contribution worthwhile, as will be noted.

II. TARGET POPULATIONS AND PROGRAM PROCESSES

The Program is designed to improve the preparation of several teacher populations. Three categories are identified: teachers in training, teachers in service, and educational leadership personnel.

Teachers in training include student teachers, doctoral interns and overseas personnel with no preparation in professional education.

Student teachers are expected to benefit from the following experiences:

- a) multi-cultural teaching and living experiences; dramatic changes in the school setting from previous experience, with the requirement that the student teacher live with a national family, provides a chance to observe a different life style and helps young teachers develop an understanding and sensitivity to the range of differences he can expect to find in the classroom.
- b) increased supervisory support; while overseas, student teachers may work with a resident doctoral intern. Daily assistance is available, and the environment brings to the surface many concerns a familiar setting might not identify.
- c) research participation; doctoral intern-student teacher cooperation provides opportunity for research assistance to research conducted overseas.

Doctoral students in education are provided with the following opportunities:
Doctoral students in education are provided with the following opportunities:

- a) instructional internship; as supervised instructors of the undergraduate courses of the program, and as assistants to the graduate courses taught, interns can increase teaching skills under the guidance of a professor, and experience teaching multi-national student groups.
- b) student teacher supervision; interns, who will most probably be involved in teacher preparation upon graduation have unusual supervisory opportunity in an environment conducive to challenging and testing of assumptions.

Overseas personnel with no preparation in professional education have the opportunity to:

- a) participate in basic teacher education courses leading to certification and
- b) attain advanced degrees in education.

Efforts to improve the instructional performance of teachers in service cover a broad spectrum of teacher populations: teachers in the overseas schools, teachers in Alabama schools, professors of the College of Education and other University professors. These teacher populations are afforded the following experiences:

- a) teachers in overseas schools: overseas conduct of professional education base courses of the University program brings current educational information to the teacher. Courses are taught after regular school hours and are related to school needs as closely as possible.

- consultative services bring personnel with special skills into the schools to work with teachers on specific problems.

- on-campus study at the University has often been the result of overseas course work. It is possible to earn a Masters' degree if two summer sessions are attended. In most instances of campus study by overseas teachers, financial assistance has been provided by the University.

- b) teachers in Alabama schools: study of overseas school programs indicated a number of components appropriate for Alabama schools. The realization that diverse populations were being educated with a minimum of distraction encouraged the formation of a research project to bring Alabama teachers from a rural school system into contact with the overseas schools. Conducted by doctoral interns previously involved in the international program, the results can be found in the Goshen Project, U.of A., 1968. This project has provided the base for a broadened third phase which will bring successful elements to the attention of teachers throughout the state. The international program will continue to provide an important input to this effort.
- c) University professors: it may seem unusual to consider professors as teachers in service, but in one of their most essential roles they are. From the international program, University professors are able to draw important elements contributing to professional growth. Professors rendering services to the program from other departments of the University, i.e., history and American studies, find the experience beneficial to their work.

The International Program has also contributed to the performance of educational leadership personnel. The challenges posed by such a program and the opportunities for cooperative action, offer a range of benefits to educational leaders at a number of levels:

- a) Overseas school administrators: to these the IE program brings information and competencies that are otherwise difficult to acquire.
- b) State Department of Education personnel: an important focus of the Goshen Project was examination of the effects of various kinds of teacher-supervisor relationships on teaching objectives and behaviors.
- c) University leaders: at a time when universities are being challenged to develop more effective and appropriate education, the international program offers an opportunity to explore ways of making institutional cooperation more feasible.

III. PROGRAM COMPONENTS

As the previous discussions indicate, a variety of experiences included in the program are appropriate for several of the target populations. In order to clarify the program processes, categories of experience can be designated as formal instruction, intern and in-service, and research. Formal instruction serves the needs of teachers and administrators in the overseas schools. An important spin-off benefit occurs when these students come to the campus, bringing experiences, attitudes and information to the classroom that add to the education of resident students.

Intern and in-service activities serve overseas and Alabama teachers, student teachers, doctoral interns and educational leaders. Improvements of teacher performance overseas and attenuation of regional ethnocentrism of educators in the University-served area are achieved through mutual assistance programs and utilization of specialized skills in new settings. Exchanges of teacher-developed materials, supervisory tasks, and other program elements increases in-service effectiveness.

Research provides improved methods for determination of program evaluations while offering opportunities for doctoral research, involves teachers and students teachers in conduct of research studies, and utilizes talents of professors, state education agency personnel and leadership personnel. These research activities yield contributions to the field of education that do not reflect regional or cultural bias.

IV. PROGRAM OUTPUTS

Outputs of the program can be measured in the number of student teachers receiving international experience, the number of credits and degrees earned, the number of research projects conducted and incorporated into program developments in overseas and Alabama schools and in the changes of attitude and ability levels of participants in the program.

Twelve percent of the College of Education graduates since 1966 have been involved in the program in twelve schools overseas. Seventy-three overseas teachers have earned 972 graduate credits. A number of University graduates have gone overseas to teach, with overseas student teachers much higher than locally-interned teachers. Five separate research projects have involved an increasing number of doctoral candidates, and doctoral students have been enrolled from overseas. Twenty-two overseas teachers have studied on campus, nine earning Masters' Degrees and one earning the Doctorate. Thirty-two faculty members have worked in Latin America, conducting courses or offering consultative service.

Program changes in the overseas and Alabama schools have been noted. Overseas, instructional materials centers and student personnel programs have been developed. Accreditation has been facilitated, and curriculum study groups organized. The Goshen Project reports program changes, improvements in materials for instruction, and teacher attitude changes. Continuing conduct of the program indicates that these changes and other beneficial results tend to accelerate with time and service improvements.

V. EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK AGENCIES

Five agencies participate in evaluation of the International Education Program, including the University of Alabama, the Office of Overseas Schools, the Regional Education Agency Project in International Education, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and the binational schools through their regional associations. Each of these agencies performs an evaluative function, though not all are related to the measure of teacher improvement. The function performed by the agency can be described as follows:

The University of Alabama; evaluation of student teachers and doctoral interns in accordance with College of Education criteria, assessment of overseas teacher improvement through program evaluation and observation, acceptance of overseas teachers to graduate school on the basis of regular evaluation or performance in overseas classes, and evaluation of faculty development by research conduct and self-study.

The Office of Overseas Schools; evaluates instructional improvement by program assessment and through on-site visits by Regional Education Officers.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; through accreditation processes, this agency measures the professional status of school staffs and also reports the nature of program deficiencies. These measures provide a basis for planning and design of the University program.

The Regional Education Agency Project; this agency has provided evaluation of the program components designed to improve state department of education personnel.

The Binational Schools Associations; these agencies provide important feedback concerning changes in client attitudes, levels of performance of students under teachers participating in the program, new innovations in program development.

On the basis of the evaluations that these agencies make, the program is modified or expanded as needed. Significant changes which have resulted include the incorporation of doctoral studies, the undergraduate courses, the expansion from four to twelve schools overseas, and other alterations in design, scheduling and support levels. The fact that the effort has been a mutually supportive one has prevented the formation of resistance to feedback information and has improved communications within the system.

An important part of the evaluative process, including such factors as attitudinal change and research-oriented behavior require longitudinal study that is in process. Based on the results which have thus far been achieved, however, these are anticipated with optimism.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The Program enhances teacher training. It also serves as a laboratory and model for further development of innovative programs, cooperation in teacher preparation, and expansion of the behaviors which professional preparation in the field of education affects.